
FRONT LINES



U.S. Agency for International Development Employee News

STYLE GUIDE

EDITING RECOMMENDATIONS—GENERAL

EDITING RECOMMENDATIONS—*FRONTLINES* FEATURES

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Introductory Note

FrontLines follows most of the recommendations of the *AP Stylebook*. The few exceptions include more capitalization of USAID job titles and other U.S. government positions, the use of serial commas, the lowercasing of internet-related words, and more extensive use of closed compounds. For additions, corrections, or questions, contact info@ibi-usa.com.

Formatting Articles

Only minimum formatting is required. Italicizing and article headlines in Title Case (not ALL CAPS) are both helpful. Articles sent to the editors should contain *no* instances of

- ⊗ two spaces following periods
- ⊗ underlining
- ⊗ words in UPPERCASE
- ⊗ digital images
- ⊗ shading or color
- ⊗ text boxes

All digital photos should be in as high a resolution as possible. Photos taken from a website or that are 72 dpi (or less) cannot be used. The word “box,” above and below text, suffices to mark text for boxes and sidebars.

A–Z References

&: do not use, unless part of an official name

acronyms, abbreviations: do not include in parentheses unless there is a subsequent reference in the same article; those in common use—such as EU, GNP, IMF, NGO, and U.N.—are not spelled out

administration: do not capitalize

Administrator: always capitalize when referring to the USAID Administrator

Agency: always capitalize when referring to USAID

and/or: do not use

anticorruption; antipoverty; antiviolence: one word, do not hyphenate

biodiversity, biosafety, biotech: one word, do not hyphenate

book titles: italicize and use title case

bullet style: no punctuation between bullets unless at least one is a complete sentence

bureau: on first reference to USAID bureaus, use formal names

ceasefire: one word

Congress: capitalize, but *congressional*, *congressman*, and *congresswoman* are lowercased

currency: convert to U.S. dollars, where possible; delete extraneous items (~~\$125,000.00 dollars~~)

dashes, em (—) and en (–): insert alt+0151 (em-dash) and alt+0150 (en dash), with no spaces before or after—*like this*.

datelines: always insert country name, unless this leads to absurdities (for example, *Mexico City, Mexico*). Use *AP Stylebook* for U.S. states.

dates: month and year (*April 2003*) require no comma; the addition of a day may require two (*on April 20, 2003, USAID...*)

decisionmaker; decisionmaking: one word

e.g.,: avoid; spell out (*, for example,*) and include commas

ellipses (...): insert (*alt+0133*) and no space before or after when a quote omits words

embassy: capitalize when the name of a country is attached (*U.S. Embassy*); lowercase otherwise

federal; federal government: lower case

fiscal year: express as *FY 2003* or *FY 2003–04* (note space, en-dash, and that 20 is not repeated)

foreign service national, foreign service officer: do not capitalize because they are not job titles

FrontLines: one word; italicize and capitalize as shown

geopolitical: one word

grassroots: one word

handpicked: one word

healthcare: one word

high tech: lowercase (two words); hyphenate when used as an adjective

i.e.,: avoid; spell out (*, that is,*) or replace with an em-dash (—)

internet: do not capitalize

job titles: capitalize when attached to a person's name; lowercase job descriptions

macroeconomic: one word

metric: convert to U.S. measurements where possible

mission: express as *USAID/Peru*; without a specific county reference do not capitalize *mission*

Mr./Mrs./Ms: do not use

multinational, multiethnic: one word

Natsios: *Andrew S. Natsios* on first reference, usually on the front page; in subsequent articles, the first reference is *Administrator Natsios* and the second (in the same article) is *Natsios*

NGO: do not spell out

names: in first reference, use first, middle initial (if known), and last name. Use last names in subsequent references; substitute first names as second reference only for small children

nonexistent, nonprofit: one word

nongovernmental organization(s): replace with NGO(s)

numbers: one through nine are not always spelled out; if unsure, use digit

Parliament: capitalized when referring to a specific country's parliament

policymaker; policymaking: one word

President: capitalized;
lowercase *presidential*

serial commas: are used in *FrontLines*—for example, *red, white, and blue*

socioeconomic; sociopolitical: one word

television: italicize names of series; put names of individual television shows in quotations

thinktank: one word

U.N., UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF: do not spell out

U.S.: use only as an adjective; never use as a noun—spell out *the United States*

U.S. government: lowercase *government*; do not use USG

worldwide: one word, lowercase

webpage; website: one word; lowercase

Washington, D.C.: in AP style, commas and periods are included; *Washington* is the dateline

EDITING RECOMMENDATIONS—GENERAL

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations and acronyms should be provided only if there is a need for the reference in the same article or sidebar. Each article and sidebar requires its own acronyms and abbreviations; it cannot be assumed that readers peruse every article on a page. Acronyms and abbreviations in very common use do not need to be spelled out: *EU, GDP, GNP, IMF, NGO, OAS, U.N., UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, USAID, WTO*. The use of Agency acronyms and abbreviations should be minimized. Do not use USG for U.S. (not US) government. Spell out FSN as foreign service national on first use. Use percent (not %) and spell out the names of all months. Do not use an ampersand (&) unless it is part of a proper name or in a term in very common usage (*R&R*). Spell out street, boulevard, and avenue unless a complete address is provided. Use AP, not post office abbreviations, for U.S. states.

American; Americans

American and Americans are terms applied to “any resident or citizen of nations in North or South America,” according to the *AP Stylebook*. “U.S. government” is preferred to “American government;” replace “Americans” with *U.S. citizens, United States residents*, or other such terms.

Bullets

Bullets that are not complete sentences do not require punctuation to terminate them. If they are not complete sentences, they begin with lowercased letters. But if at least one bullet is a complete sentence, all must begin with capital letters and require terminal punctuation. Bullets should be syntactically similar. Do not use numbers and bullets in the same paragraph.

Bylines

Bylines should be consistently placed under rules at the end of articles and end with a period. Bylines should include titles or other relevant information about authors (*Adolfo A. Franco, Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Latin American and the Caribbean*). An article adapted from story should simply state *Adapted from an article by* ——. If the first person is used in an article for which two authors are credited, the secondary writer should be identified (*Jeffrey Ashley, with Heather Evans*).

Capitalization (General)

Because capital letters make running text harder to read, they should be avoided whenever possible. They are used in headlines, to indicate proper nouns and titles (including names of conferences), names of distinct regions (*the Middle East, West Africa*), historic events (*the Green Revolution*), and

important words in the titles of publications. Such words as *party*, *mountain*, *road*, *harbor*, *tunnel*, and *river* are capitalized when they form an integral part of a proper name, but not in plural use (*the Republican and Democratic parties*) or when standing alone (*the party leaders*). Words that are mostly descriptive or directional (*northern*, *east coast*) are not usually capitalized; neither are seasons of the year. (See also *internet*.)

Capitalization of Names of Governmental Bodies

Capitalization of the formal names of governmental bodies is required. Some informal names—*Congress* and *Agency* (for USAID)—are capitalized. The terms *federal government* and *executive branch* do not require capitalization; neither do adjectives such as *congressional* and *cabinet-level*. Used generically, *department* and *agency* are not capitalized. In plural use, the word *departments* is lowercased and proper name elements are capitalized (*the departments of Labor and Justice*). The formal names of USAID bureaus and offices require capitalization. The word *embassy* is capitalized when the name of a country is attached (*Embassy of France*, *French Embassy*), but not otherwise (*the embassy bombings*; *the bombings of U.S. Embassies*). (See also *USAID management units*.)

Capitalization of Civil Titles

The capitalization of civil titles follows AP style.

Capitalization of Foreign Governmental Titles

Capitalization of foreign governmental titles follows the style for the U.S. government (see below).

Capitalization of U.S. Governmental Titles (see USAID titles below)

Capitalization of U.S. governmental titles follows the GPO *Manual of Style*, rather than AP. To be consistent with the capitalization of USAID job titles, capitalization is required for generic references to the titles of U.S. heads of state (*President*, *Vice President*, *Governor*), heads or assistant heads of federal departments (*Secretary*, *Acting Secretary*, *Assistant Secretary*, *Director*, *Assistant Chief, Administrator*), and the two highest levels of a diplomatic mission (*Ambassador*, *Chargé d’Affaires*). The same applies to U.S. senators, representatives, and congressional titles (*Speaker*, *Minority Leader*, *President Pro Tem*). The word *acting* is capitalized if it is attached to a capitalized title, but *former*, *ex-*, *-elect*, and *designate* are not (*the Acting Secretary*; *former President Carter*; *the Vice President-elect*). The designations *foreign service officer* and *foreign service national* are not capitalized because they are not job titles.

Capitalization of USAID Titles

Capitalization of USAID titles requires special attention—*Administrator* is capitalized, even when the word stands alone. Other USAID job titles are capitalized if they are attached to a person's name. Generic use of such titles does not require capitalization (*Mission Director Lisa Chiles; a conference of mission directors*). Job descriptions (*a strategic planner with the bureau*) do not require capitalization.

Captions

Captions should attempt to address the “who, what, where, and when” of the image and relate to the article's headline. In caption text, use active verbs and present tense. In general, each image should have a caption, even if it shows a website or a map. A quotation from the subject of a photo should not be used as the caption if no information is provided about the person.

Compound Words

Compound words may combine two words that constitute a single concept into one word. Among closed compound words recommended are: *aquaculture*, *anticorruption* (*antipoverty*), *biodiversity* (*biotechnology*, *biotech*, *biosafety*), *ceasefire*, *coauthor*, *geopolitical*, *grassroots*, *handpicked*, *healthcare*, *homegrown*, *interethnic*, *jumpstart*, *macroeconomic*, *multidonor* (*multinational*, *multiparty*, *multisectoral*), *nonexistent* (*nongovernmental*, *nonprofit*), *officeholder*, *offshore*, *pathbreaking*, *peacekeeping*, *policymaking* (*policymaker*) *postconflict* (*postcommunist*), *retraining socioeconomic* (*sociopolitical*), *subsector*, *subnational*, *thinktank*, *webpage*, *website*, *worldwide*. (See also *hyphenation*; *internet*.)

Currency

Where possible, provide U.S. dollar amounts instead of figures in foreign currencies. Do not spell out “dollars” following the use of a dollar sign (\$800 million ~~dollars~~), and provide rounded figures (without .00).

Datelines

Datelines for international locations should include the name of the country, unless the addition is absurd (*Mexico City*; *Guatemala City*). Follow AP style for U.S. cities and states. Use of Washington as a dateline should be minimized.

Dates and Times

Dates and times require consistent treatment. All months should be spelled out in full. *August 2002* does not require a comma, though *August 8, 2002* does. Do not use ordinals (*June 14*, not *June 14th*). Decade references (*1980s*) do not require an apostrophe. Specify the year or month rather than make reference to “this,” “next,” or “last” year or month.

Em Dashes

Em dashes (—), used in a pair, set off an explanatory phrase or digression. Single em dashes may be used for an emphatic pause or an abrupt change in thought. (*See also en dash.*)

Emphasis

Emphasis is best achieved by selecting appropriate words. Italics may be used sparingly, but *never* use bold, underline, or all caps to make a point.

En Dashes

En dashes (–) are used to connect inclusive dates and page numbers (*2000–03; see pages 8–9*). They should not accompany the words from or between (*from 1968 to 1972; between 1968 and 1970*).

Headlines

Headlines should be pithy—no more than three lines, preferably fewer, though their words should fill available headline space. Headlines should not be vague (*In Darkening Pools*). *To, and, the, and of* are not usually capitalized unless they begin a new line. Numbers are not spelled out. Quotations should be enclosed within single quotation marks (*‘Morale Up,’ Says Natsios*).

Hyphenation

Hyphenation may be required between two words that function as an adjective and precede a noun when its omission is likely to lead to misunderstanding. Hyphenation should never be used with adverbs that end in “-ly” (*well-known leader; badly needed aid*). Suspended hyphens are required for a series (*medium- and long-term gains*). When possible, a hyphenated compound should give way to a closed compound (*bio-tech* becomes *biotech*). (*See also compound words.*)

Internet

“Internet” is fast losing ground as a proper name. Many publications lowercase *internet* and *worldwide web*; in time, all probably will. *Online, email, webmaster, webpage, and website* are written as one word, without capitalization. However, *web address* remains two words.

Italics

Italics should be used to emphasize points and set off non-English words that are not yet incorporated into the language (*loya jirga*). Italics also identify book, newspaper, and magazine titles, and the names of television series.

Numbers

Numbers below 10 are often spelled out in running text. However, numbers are not spelled out in headlines or captions, or when they refer to addresses, ages, dimensions, distances, dollar amounts, highways, millions or billions, percentages, speed, temperatures (except for zero), and times of day. Spell out fractions. In numbers above 999, use commas to set off groups of three numerals. Use decimal points if figures are above a million or a billion. To avoid confusion in a sentence where two numbers run together, write out the smaller number (*The lab has 17 seventeen-inch monitors*).

Photo Credits

Photo credits should be flush left under the photo and reviewed for consistency. Recommended format is *Kirsten Michener, USAID*.

Publication Titles

Publication titles are set in italics and title case.

Pull Quotes

Pull quotes do not follow AP style. Though they capture an essential point, their words do not appear in the body of the article. When appropriate, they should be followed by the names of speakers, set in small caps, followed by titles or other contextual information where possible. (*See also quotations.*)

Quotation Marks

Quotation marks should be used sparingly. Within an article, quotation marks should be used for the titles of magazine articles, chapter titles, and webpage headings (*"The President's Management Agenda" in results.gov*). Quotation marks are not needed for phrases in common use (*state-of-the-art*) or to signal a metaphorical expression. They are used to introduce a new phrase (*"SmartBus"*), but not after first use. Quotation marks are also used to set off titles of movies, plays, operas, songs, TV programs (though not names of series), speeches, and works of art. Close quotation marks follow commas, periods, and other such punctuation.

Quotations

Quotations should not be changed; omissions should be signaled with ellipses (...); additions (other than minor corrections of spelling and grammar) should be placed within square brackets.

Serial Commas

Serial commas (for a series of three or more elements) help ensure clarity. A comma is required before the final “and” (*USAID has been providing healthcare, clean water, and food*).

U.S.

U.S. (with periods) is an adjective (*U.S. government, U.S. economy*). Spell out “United States” when used as a noun. (*See also American, Americans.*)

USAID Management Units

USAID management units should be referenced by their formal names: *the Bureau for Africa* not “the Africa bureau.” References to USAID missions should be as follows: *USAID/Peru*, with the country’s name in English (with the possible exception of *Côte d’Ivoire*). (*See also capitalization of governmental bodies.*)

Web Addresses

Web addresses must be treated consistently. They should never be underlined or contain capital letters. References to the USAID website are in the following format: *www.USAID.gov* *Keyword: Missions.*

Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is usually written with a comma, and with two periods in AP style. “Washington” is the dateline.

EDITING RECOMMENDATIONS—*FRONTLINES* FEATURES

“Awards Recipients”

Awards recipients should include bureau and job title, below the recipient’s name.

“Frontlines Correspondents and Reporters”

Frontlines correspondents and reporters should be ranged under an alphabetical arrangement of bureaus and other headings. Acronyms and abbreviations are permissible in this feature.

Front Page Pull Quotes

The title and name of the person should accompany the pull quote. (*See also pull quotes, quotations.*)

“In Memoriam”

“In Memoriam” entries are ordered alphabetically by last name, with no comma unless there is a parenthetical insertion (such as age). Job titles must be capitalized consistently.

“Where In The World”

“Where In The World” places first names first, retaining alphabetical order by last name.

“Your Voice”

“Your Voice” should include identifying or contextual information about the writer (or writers).

USAID Bureaus and Offices

Office of the Administrator (A/AID)

Executive Secretariat (ES)

Global Development Alliance Secretariat (GDA)

Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT)

Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA)

Bureau for Global Health (GH)

Bureau for Africa (AFR)

Bureau for Asia and the Near East (ANE)

Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E)

Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

Bureau for Policy and Program Coordination (PPC)

Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA)

Bureau for Management (M)

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

Office of Security (SEC)

Office of the General Counsel (GC)

For a comprehensive listing of the divisions and offices within these organizational units, see <http://www.usaid.gov/about/bureaus.html>

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